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Appl. No. 10/771,152
Amdt. dated August 23, 2007
Reply to Office Action of July 12, 2007

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1: (currently amended) An electrochemical system comprising a plurality of cells;

a current supply/draw means for superimposing modulated current values through the plurality of cells, wherein the current supply/draw means comprises a modulator, wherein the modulator comprises arranged a control device and a modulated current generator, wherein the control device is operable to control the modulated current generator to superimpose the modulated current values in burst time periods for high frequency resistance measurement, with a rest time periods between the burst time periods of no superimposition of modulated current values;

an external load connected to the plurality of cells in parallel with the current supply/draw means for drawing a DC current from the plurality of cells wherein the DC current is drawn from the plurality of cells during both the rest time period and the burst time periods;

a measuring device including a plurality of inputs connected across the plurality of cells to generate signals indicative of voltage and current characteristics of the plurality of cells; and,

a controller for controlling at least one system operating condition based on to the voltage and current characteristics received from the measuring device, the controller being connected to the measuring device;

Claim 2 (Previously Cancelled)

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The electrochemical system as defined in claim 2 1 wherein the modulator is an integral part of the controller.

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Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The electrochemical system as defined in claim 2 1 wherein the plurality of inputs are connected across individual cells in the plurality of cells and the modulator is operable to superimpose modulated current values through the individual cells.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The electrochemical system as defined in claim 2 1 wherein the controller is operable to control, in real time, the at least one system operating condition based on the voltage and current characteristics received from the measuring device.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The electrochemical system as defined in claim 2 1, wherein the controller is operable to alert an operator based on alarm conditions determined from the voltage and current characteristics received from the measuring device.

Claim 7 (Previously Cancelled)

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 2 1, wherein the measuring device provides a plurality of primary channels for the measured voltage and current signals, there being one channel for the voltage across each cell, and wherein the measuring device includes a splitter for separating out at least the DC components of the voltages across the individual cells from the primary channels, the splitter having first channels as outputs for the DC components.

Claim 9 (Original): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 8, wherein the splitter includes second channels as outputs for the AC components of the voltages across the individual cells.

Claim 10 (Original): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 8, wherein the measuring device includes a plurality of instrumentation amplifiers connected to the

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inputs of the measuring device and having outputs providing the plurality of the primary channels and an analog multiplexer connected to at least the first channels from the channel splitter, wherein a multiplexer control line is connected between the controller and the analog multiplexer for controlling the analog multiplexer to switch sequentially between at least the first channels.

Claim 11 (Original): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 10, which further includes a first analog to digital converter connected to the output of the analog multiplexer, a voltage data bus connected between the first analog to digital converter and the controller and an analog to digital control line connected between the controller and the first analog to digital converter for control thereof.

Claim 12 (Original): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 11, wherein a current sensing device is provided connected in series with the individual cells for measuring the current, wherein the current sensing device is connected to the controller.

Claim 13 (Original): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 12, wherein outputs of the current sensing device are connected to a current amplifier and wherein the current amplifier has an output for a current measurement signal connected to the controller.

Claim 14 (Previously Cancelled)

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the controller includes an input, connectable to a computing device for supply of control signals for controlling the controller.

Claim 16 (Previously Cancelled)

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Claim 17 (Previously Amended): A method of controlling at least one system operating condition of a multi-cell electrochemical system, the method comprising:

- (a) superimposing modulated current values across a plurality of cells of the electrochemical device in burst time periods for high frequency resistance measurement, with a rest time periods between the burst time periods of no superimposition of modulated current values;
- (b) drawing current from the plurality of cells to generate voltage and current signals indicative of voltage and current characteristics of the plurality of cells; and,
- (c) controlling the at least one system operating condition based on the voltage and current characteristics of the plurality of cells; and,
- (d) driving a load using a current drawn from the plurality of cells during both the rest time period and the burst time periods, wherein the current drawn from the plurality of cells during the burst time periods is drawn in parallel with the current drawn in step (b).

Claim 18 (Original): The method as defined in claim 17 wherein step (a) comprises superimposing the modulated current values across individual cells in the plurality of cells; and step (b) comprises drawing current from the individual cells to generate voltage and current signals indicative of voltage and current characteristics of the individual cells.

Claim 19 (Cancelled)

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The method as claimed in claim 19 17, wherein step (a) comprises controlling the superimposing to provide a series of set interference conditions, and measuring, for each interference condition, at least some of the voltage and current characteristics of the electrochemical device.

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Claim 21 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 20 wherein step (a) comprises varying a frequency of the superimposed current values; step (b) comprises generating the voltage and current signals at selected frequencies for the superimposed modulated current values, and determining from the voltage and current signals a plurality of real and imaginary components of the impedance of the individual cells; and, step (c) comprises controlling the at least one system operating condition based on the plurality of real and imaginary components of the impedance of the individual cells.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): A method as claimed in claim 19 17, wherein step (b) comprises connecting inputs of a plurality of differential amplifiers across individual cells of the electrochemical device, measuring the voltage and current of the cells with the plurality of differential amplifiers to generate the voltage and current signals, supplying the voltage and current signals to a multiplexer and operating the multiplexer to sequentially supply the voltage and current signals to a controller for performing step (c).

Claim 23 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 22, further comprising converting each voltage and current signal selected by the analog multiplexer to a digital signal in a voltage analog to digital converter.

Claim 24 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising providing a current sensing device connected in series with the cells for measuring the current through the load, measuring the voltage across the current sensing device to determine the current through the load and thereby generating a current measurement signal, and supplying the current measurement signal to the controller.

Claim 25 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising converting the current measurement signal to a digital current measurement signal, and supplying the digital current measurement signal to the controller.

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Claim 26 (Previously Cancelled)

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): An electrochemical system comprising
a plurality of cells;

a measuring device including a plurality of inputs connected across the plurality of cells to generate voltage and current signals indicative of voltage and current characteristics of the plurality of cells, wherein the measuring device ~~comprises a modulator and~~ provides a plurality of primary channels for the voltage and current signals, there being one channel for the voltage across each cell, and wherein the measuring device includes a splitter for separating out at least the DC components of the voltages across the individual cells from the primary channels, the splitter having first channels as outputs for the DC components;

a current supply/draw means comprising a modulator for superimposing modulated current values through the plurality of cells; and,

a controller for controlling at least one system operating condition based on the voltage and current characteristics received from the measuring device, the controller being connected to the measuring device.

Claim 28 (Previously Added): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 27, wherein the splitter includes second channels as outputs for the AC components of the voltages across the individual cells.

Claim 29 (Previously Added): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 27, wherein the measuring device includes a plurality of instrumentation amplifiers connected to the inputs of the measuring device and having outputs providing the plurality of the primary channels and an analog multiplexer connected to at least the first channels from the channel splitter, wherein a multiplexer control line is connected between the controller and the analog multiplexer for controlling the analog multiplexer to switch sequentially between at least the first channels.

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Claim 30 (Previously Added): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 29, which further includes a first analog to digital converter connected to the output of the analog multiplexer, a voltage data bus connected between the first analog to digital converter and the controller and an analog to digital control line connected between the controller and the first analog to digital converter for control thereof.

Claim 31 (Previously Added): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 30, wherein a current sensing device is provided connected in series with the individual cells for measuring the current, wherein the current sensing device is connected to the controller.

Claim 32 (Previously Added): The electrochemical system as claimed in claim 31, wherein outputs of the current sensing device are connected to a current amplifier and wherein the current amplifier has an output for a current measurement signal connected to the controller.